

## Seatrout Background

### **Spotted Seatrout FMP**

The spotted seatrout was included in the original Bay Program Chesapeake Bay *Weakfish and Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan* in 1990. The management plan was revised to include weakfish only in 2003. Since that time, there has been no new management plan for spotted seatrout. A Public Information Document (PID) was issued in November, 2009 by the ASMFC for an amendment to the interstate FMP for Spanish mackerel, spot, and spotted seatrout. The ASFMC is expected to approve the omnibus amendment for spot, spotted seatrout and Spanish mackerel in August, 2011. The omnibus amendment includes recommended measures to protect the spotted seatrout spawning stock and requires a coastal minimum length limit. The ASFMC adopted the spotted seatrout FMP in 1984 for states from Maryland to Florida.

#### Stock Status:

A coast-wide stock assessment of spotted seatrout has not been done because this species is considered to be largely non-migratory. Where state assessments have been performed (NC, SC, GA, FL) on local stocks, there have been some data limitations. Stock status varies by state. The MD recreational harvest has been approximately 10,000 pounds or less for the past 10 years. The VA recreational fishery has harvested up to 761,067 pounds (2010). The commercial harvest mirrors this pattern, as MD harvests have been approximately 10% of VA commercial harvests. VA commercial harvest of spotted seatrout has varied from a low of 3,773 pounds in 2001 to 84,903 pounds in 2008.

#### Management Objectives and Measures:

The ASFMC FMP includes maintaining a spawning potential ratio of 20% or greater to reduce the opportunities for recruitment failures. A 12" minimum total length is recommended and all states have complied with this minimum. Net mesh sizes corresponding to this size limit for directed fisheries, data collection, and state stock assessments were also recommended. MD and VA have 14" recreational size limits with 10 fish creels. The MD commercial size limit is 12" with minimum trawl and gill net meshes. The VA commercial H&L limit is 14" with a 10 fish limit and overall quota of 51,104 pounds.

### **Administrative History — Size and Creel Limits for Spotted Seatrout COMAR 08.02.05.13**

Regulation .13 adopted effective August 30, 1993 (20:17 Md. R. 1345)

- Size limit 12"
- Creel limit 10/person/day
  - The original proposal published April 16, 1993 (20:8 Md. R. 730-731) stated that the creel was: 10/person/day for 1993; 5/person/day in 1994 and after that.
  - The 5/person/day provision was dropped in the final action due to public comment. Only the 10/person/day remained. Published on August 20, 1993 (20:17 Md. R. 1345)

Regulation .13 amended as an emergency provision effective October 19, 1994 (21:23 Md. R. 1929); original emergency text superseded and Regulation .13 amended as an emergency provision effective February 3, 1995 (22:4 Md. R. 231); emergency text superseded and Regulation .13 amended as an emergency provision effective March 31, 1995 (22:8 Md. R. 594); emergency status extended at 22:21 Md. R. 1613

- Size limit changed from 12” to 14” for recreational
- 12” size limit adopted for commercial

Regulation .13 amended effective February 26, 1996 (23:4 Md. R. 272)

- Size limits from emergency action were made permanent
- Conservation of stocks to provide long term viability of fishery

Regulation .13A, B amended as an emergency provision effective June 9, 2003 (30:13 Md. R. 850); amended permanently effective August 18, 2003 (30:16 Md. R. 1073)

- Weakfish changes

Regulation .13B, C, D amended as an emergency provision effective June 6, 1997 (24:13 Md. R. 926); amended permanently effective September 8, 1997 (24:18 Md. R. 1295)

- Weakfish changes

Regulation .13C amended as an emergency provision effective November 1, 1996 (23:24 Md. R. 1675); emergency status expired January 1, 1997

Regulation .13D, E amended as an emergency provision effective October 10, 1997 (24:22 Md. R. 1549); amended permanently effective April 6, 1998 (25:7 Md. R. 526)

- Net restrictions and public notice provision

Chapter revised effective February 28, 2005 (32:4 Md. R. 409)

Regulation .13B amended effective October 8, 2007 (34:20 Md. R. 1736)

- Weakfish changes

Regulation .13 amended as an emergency provision effective April 9, 2010 (37:10 Md. R. 718); amended permanently effective June 28, 2010 (37:13 Md. R. 851)

- Weakfish changes

## **Other States**

- Maryland
  - Minimum size: 14"
  - Possession limit: 10/person
- Virginia
  - Minimum size: 14"
  - Possession limit (April 1 – November 30): 10/person
  - Possession limit (December 1 – March 31): 5/person
- PRFC
  - Minimum size: 14"
  - Possession limit: 10/person
- Delaware
  - Minimum size: 12"
  - Possession limit: none (unlimited)
- North Carolina
  - Minimum size: 14"
  - Possession limit: 4/person
- South Carolina
  - Minimum size: 14"
  - Possession limit: 10/person
- New Jersey
  - Minimum size: 13"
  - Possession limit: 1/person
  - Combines weakfish with spotted seatrout
- Georgia
  - Minimum size: 13"
  - Possession limit: 15/person
- Florida
  - Minimum size: 15"
  - Possession limit: 4-6/person, depending on management zone

## **MRFS Data**

Year	Harvest	Catch
2007	0	2,000
2008	no data	no data
2009	7,900	3,800
2010	3,000	110,000
2011	3,000	10,000